

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**Department of Health Services**



SANDRA SHEWRY  
Director



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER  
Governor

September 29, 2006

Dear Colleagues:

We have a vision for a healthier California. Governor Schwarzenegger's 10 Step Vision for a Healthy California and the Summit on Health, Nutrition, and Obesity in September 2005 were calls to action to bring focus and momentum to the transformation that is needed to create the healthy California in which we all want to live. This month's release by the Governor's office of the *California Obesity Prevention Plan: A Vision for Tomorrow, Strategic Actions for Today* (<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/CAObesityPrevention/default.htm>) further advanced this agenda. The plan provides the structure and the strategies to move ahead. For this plan to work, all sectors – employers, schools, health care, industry, family, and government must take action. Our department has experience and success in effecting major societal changes that resulted in significantly improved health for the people of our state. We can step-up to lead this effort too.

CDHS will serve as the convener and the catalyst to turn this plan into action. To start this process, CDHS needs to develop a department-wide coordinated action agenda across all programs. CDHS staff, programs, and publications contain a wealth of nutrition, physical activity, and chronic disease expertise with the vision to turn the strategic plan into a working action agenda.

To that end, I have asked Dr. Neal Kohatsu, Chief of the Cancer Control Branch, to join Kathleen Mintert and Lisa Hershey in establishing the Obesity Prevention Group (OPG) in the Director's Office. Staff from across the department will be asked to step forward along with key external partners to serve as OPG expert advisors, planners, and ultimately members of the implementation team. OPG will guide the department's obesity prevention efforts across all related nutrition and physical activity promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention programs, and funding opportunities. I will continue my active involvement and oversight of the department's work in obesity, keeping the Director and other Chief Deputies apprised of our progress.

The OPG aims to:

1. Create the department-wide obesity prevention action agenda, based on the Obesity Prevention Plan's framework, with all sectors engaged in the process;
2. Maintain obesity prevention as a high priority within CDHS and the new Departments of Public Health and Health Care Services;
3. Coordinate the development of all obesity-related proposals and plans for funding opportunities;
4. Focus on statewide leadership and coordination – serve as the liaison to key external partners; and,

5. Work with all nutrition and physical activity programs, focus on cross-CDHS leveraging and synergy, reduce fragmentation, and serve as the portal for executive staff, providing regular updates on progress and an opportunity for input and direction to the OPG's efforts.

The first step in the development of the action agenda will be for the OPG to complete the mapping that was initiated last year of the existing CDHS capacity in obesity prevention. I have asked the OPG to organize this effort. This inventory of current capacity will lead to a broader understanding of the collective expertise and resources available to us thus fostering collaboration and synergy among programs and leading to strategic alignment and investment of resources in the implementation of the action agenda.

I know you will join me in making this effort successful. I would encourage each of you to review the strategic plan and start to think about how your work in the department can contribute to our success in implementing the 10 Step Vision. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Horton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Horton, MD, MSPH